Amendments to the Claims

1   Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of using ~~enabling an instant messaging ("IM") user to~~

2   ~~specify~~ policy information ~~usable~~ in responding to arrival of instant messages, comprising steps

3   of:

4   defining, by [[the]] an instant messaging ("IM") [[IM]] user, policy information specifying

5   criteria for responding to arrival of instant messages, wherein the policy information comprises a

6   list of selected application programs which are each distinct from an instant messaging application

7   used by the IM user and which are each executable on a computing device of the IM user; [[and]]

8   receiving ~~using the defined policy information, upon arrival of~~ an instant message from an

9   IM sender who is not already participating in an IM session with the IM user;

10   programmatically determining, responsive to the receiving, whether any of the selected

11   application programs in the list are currently executing on the computing device of the IM user;

12   and [[,]]

13   responding ~~to programmatically determine a response~~ to the ~~arriving~~ arrival of the instant

14   message by opening a new window on a graphical user interface of the computing device of the

15   IM user and displaying the instant message therein if the programmatically determining step has a

16   negative result, or by adding an icon representing the instant message to an already-open window

17   but not displaying the instant message itself if the programmatically determining step has a

18   positive result, wherein:

19   the already-open window comprises one of an already-open buddy list window that

20   visually depicts a list of each IM partner from an IM address book of the IM user or an already-

21   open status window that visually depicts a list of each currently-active IM partner of the IM user;

22   the icon is added in association with a representation, in the visually-depicted list,

23 of the IM sender; and

24   the icon visually indicates that the instant message is available for on-request

25 display and can be activated by the IM user to cause the on-request display of the instant message.

Claims 2 - 8 (canceled)

1   Claim 9 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the policy information

2   is specified as a set of rules containing the criteria for opening a new IM window for incoming

3   instant messages and wherein the programmatically determined response is to open a new IM

4   window for the arriving instant message.

Claims 10 - 14 (canceled)

1   Claim 15 (currently amended): The method according to Claim [[14]] 1, further comprising the

2   step of generating an wherein the audible indicator when the programmatically determining step

3   has the positive result. is generated only if the policy indicates that a new IM window is not to be

4   opened for displaying the arriving instant message.

Claims 16 - 27 (canceled)

1   Claim 28 (new): A system to use policy information in responding to arrival of instant messages,

2   comprising:

3   means for defining, by an instant messaging ("IM") user, policy information specifying

4   criteria for responding to arrival of instant messages, wherein the policy information comprises a

5   list of selected application programs which are each distinct from an instant messaging application

6   used by the IM user and which are each executable on a computing device of the IM user;

7   means for receiving an instant message from an IM sender who is not already participating

8   in an IM session with the IM user;

9   means for programmatically determining, responsive to operation of the means for

10   receiving, whether any of the selected application programs in the list are currently executing on

11   the computing device of the IM user; and

12   means for responding to the arrival of the instant message by opening a new window on a

13   graphical user interface of the computing device of the IM user and displaying the instant message

14   therein if the means for programmatically determining yields a negative result, or by adding an

15   icon representing the instant message to an already-open window but not displaying the instant

16   message itself if the means for programmatically determining yields a positive result, wherein:

17   the already-open window comprises one of an already-open buddy list window that

18   visually depicts a list of each IM partner from an IM address book of the IM user or an already-

19   open status window that visually depicts a list of each currently-active IM partner of the IM user;

20   the icon is added in association with a representation, in the visually-depicted list,

21   of the IM sender; and

22   the icon visually indicates that the instant message is available for on-request

23   display and can be activated by the IM user to cause the on-request display of the instant message.

1   Claim 29 (new): A computer program product for using policy information in responding to

2   arrival of instant messages, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-

3   readable storage media and comprising:

4   computer-readable program code for defining, by an instant messaging ("IM") user, policy

5   information specifying criteria for responding to arrival of instant messages, wherein the policy

6   information comprises a list of selected application programs which are each distinct from an

7   instant messaging application used by the IM user and which are each executable on a computing

8   device of the IM user;

9   computer-readable program code for receiving an instant message from an IM sender who

10   is not already participating in an IM session with the IM user;

11   computer-readable program code for programmatically determining, responsive to

12   operation of the computer-readable program code for receiving, whether any of the selected

13   application programs in the list are currently executing on the computing device of the IM user;

14   and

15   computer-readable program code for responding to the arrival of the instant message by

16   opening a new window on a graphical user interface of the computing device of the IM user and

17   displaying the instant message therein if the computer-readable program code for

18   programmatically determining yields a negative result, or by adding an icon representing the

19   instant message to an already-open window but not displaying the instant message itself if the

20   computer-readable program code for programmatically determining yields a positive result,

21   wherein:

22   the already-open window comprises one of an already-open buddy list window that

23   visually depicts a list of each IM partner from an IM address book of the IM user or an already-

24   open status window that visually depicts a list of each currently-active IM partner of the IM user;

25   the icon is added in association with a representation, in the visually-depicted list,

26   of the IM sender; and

27   the icon visually indicates that the instant message is available for on-request

28   display and can be activated by the IM user to cause the on-request display of the instant message.